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S H O R T P O E M S

SHORT POEMS

BY

FREDERICK COLLINS WILSON.



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TO

MY FRIEND

ALFRED AUSTIN,

I DEDICATE

THESE FEW SHORT POEMS.

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S H O R T P O E M S.

ON THE 21ST BIRTHDAY OF H. R. H. ALBERT
EDWARD PRINCE OF WALES.

STRETCH forth Thine arm, O Lord our mighty God !
In benediction o'er our Prince's head ;
Guide him that he his royal way may tread,
E'en as his noble father Albert trod.

Stretch forth Thine arm, O mighty King of kings !
And grant him grace on this auspicious day,
To learn from her who holds her peaceful sway
What mighty gifts a holy Monarch brings.

England holds up her praying arms between
Victoria's life, O Holy One, and Thee ;
She being so dear, we pray thee let her be
For many years to come her Britain's Queen !

But when Thou biddest her to come to Thee,
And cast her crown before Thy throne,
Seeing thou hast for her a better one,
On this her son we pray Thee let her mantle be.

THE WIDOW.

How pale she was, with her hair braided
And backward drawn from off her brow,
As sat she with her soft eyes shaded,
Just so she sits before me now !

Lips that were somewhat open parted,
And slightly curled, but not in scorn ;
Eyes into which the tears oft started,
Yet fair eyes, withal forlorn.

Her present is a happy past,
Her pleasures much akin to pain ;
She lives thro' *this* year on the last,
And tries to dream old times again.

“ My luxury,” she said, “ is grief.
And I luxuriate in woe ;
Its memory my sole relief—
The only one I care to know.”

She took the weepers from her wrists,
She took the cap from off her brow ;
But, tho' ten years have passed, insists
She'll wear her crape, as then, so now.

A hunting-watch hangs at her waist,
And on her hand a manly ring,
And at her breast a locket chased
With names in blue enamelling.

“His name,” she said, “and now our name—
Or rather mine alone,” she sighed :
“His family from the Highlands came,
And for the Stuarts many died.

“He was the last. He left no kin:
I was chief mourner on the day
They closed the vault and shut him in ;
I was alone—am lone away !

“I keep his memory fresh and green,
Both waking and in dreams awhile :
The face that I have often seen
Smile on me, always seems to smile.

“ This was his watch, his ring was this ;

But *this* he gave me at the door
Of Holy Church, as with a kiss
He said, ‘ Wife ! love me evermore.’

“ This one you see, this signet one,

He always used himself to wear ;
And in this locket, shut alone,
I keep a lock of his brown hair.

“ Oh ! sir, you’re going to Auchtertyre,

You’ll see the grave where he reposes,
You’ll pardon, sir, my fond desire
That I might send him these Scotch roses.”

She pressed her lips on every rose,

She pressed her lips on every thorn :
A highland one it was that grows
’Neath gayer roses on our lawn.

* * * * *

I placed the roses on his grave.

You live, I said, you ten-year corse!

Your wife has kept the troth she gave,

And keeps for better and for worse.

ON KISSING THE CROSS.



LET me not kiss His heart ;
It is too fond of me,
I dare not make the wound to smart
With such a kiss as mine would be.

Let me not kiss His hands ;
Too bountiful to me,
For each a truer kiss demands
Than such as mine could ever be.

Let me not kiss His feet ;
So tired with seeking me,
For purer lips than mine should greet
Them with a kiss of purity.

I'll kiss the chancel stone,
Or else the chancel gate,
Or rather, in disgrace alone,
Will kiss the church door ; weep and wait.

Good Friday,
A.D. 1862.

A VISION OF HEAVEN.



OFt I've read, in solemn story,
Of the kingdom and the crown,
Of the Passion and the glory,
And the elders bowing down.

Of the shining sapphire sea,
And the bow above the throne,
And the strains eternally
Rising up in heavenly tone.

Of the angels ever singing
Alleluia to the Lamb ;
Michael's golden censer swinging
Incense to the great " I Am."

Of the ceaseless, noiseless turning
Of the Cherubimic wheels ;
Of the seven lamps a-burning,
And the Book with seven seals.

Of the Queen of Heaven sitting,
Gazing on her Holy one ;
Of her praises unremitting,
For the work the sword hath done.

And she sits all calmly gazing
At the right hand of her own,
Taper fingers oft upraising
To her son upon the Throne.

Then the Incense and the praying
Of the Saints roll up before,
Whilst her virgin lips keep saying.
“Jesu ! spare them !” evermore.

And the Holy One of David
Lifts his glorious eyes on high,
Whilst His golden locks are wavèd
By the Angels passing by.

Hush ! the Lamb is interceding,
Speaking o’er the sapphire sea
Words of peace to help our needing,
As he spake o’er Galilee.

Jesu spotless ! Jesu holy !

We grow urgent in our need ;

We are useless, sinful wholly,

Saviour ! for thy children plead !

ON MAGGIORE.



THERE was melody pure in the tone of her voice

As she sang in the boat on the water,

Singing most softly the song of her choice

From a book of old rhymes I had brought her :

Our boatmen enchanted lay-to on their oars
As we drifted along Maggiore,
The echoes awoke on the perfumy shores
The pomegranate sleeping in glory.

The song was a popular one of her land,
And she sang it now softly, now bitterly ;
Dashing aside a bright tear with her hand,
As she sang of the sorrows of Italy.

She sang "*Libertà*" looking up to the skies,
"*Fino all'Etna la luce norella ;*"
This time, "*Libertà*" with the tears in her eyes,
"*Sia d'Italia la majica stella.*"

And then the two boatmen held on to their oars,
And shouted the chorus of "*la bayonetta*,"
"Death to the Tyrant on Italy's shores!
Madre Italia, vendetta ! vendetta !"

Then more softly she sang, 'of the sorrow and wrong,
And the curse of the Austrian stranger :
“ Be patient, my Italy, wait and grow strong,
Be patient, as Christ in the manger.”

A MAGDALEN.

No hope for her, so say her sisters,

No hope for her in all the land ;

Her name—their roseate lips it blisters,

Nor why she fell they understand.

They'll give their money, say 'tis shocking,
But still a barrier must be built—
And leave her lone, her baby rocking,
With all the mystery of her guilt.

Leave her a-weeping, sighing, lonely.
With that sad burden at her breast,
To seek her death, if God were only
One-half as pitiless as the rest.

O Magdalen ! in these days surely
You never would have met the Lord.
Or at your entrance these demurely
Would have uprisen and left the board.

Nor prized your box of alabaster,
With all its store of ointment sweet ;
They would have whispered to the master,
“ She is not fit for you, nor meet.”

And quite forgetful of their fifty
In thinking of your hundred pence,
She should have been, they'd say, more thrifty,
And so not fallen in this expense.

Christ said, Poor soul, she is forgiven
So much, because she lov'd much !
And sent her from his presence, shriven
By his great sacramental touch.

Women of England ! my dear sisters !
The Pharisee may carp and doubt ;
Let him apply the cruel blisters
To hearts that are too sore without.

Do you arise, and help the weeping,
Weak, feeble women in their woe ;
In Christ's pure blood their sorrow steeping,
So find your own the lesser grow.

And “ Magdalen ! sweet saint, grown saintly
By the great power of your love,”
Poor fainting women speak but faintly,
“ Tell it louder up above !”

FORMOSA.



A WEARY look in his dark eyes,
A restless pulse at either hand ;
And there are many who surmise
That he will shortly leave the land.

I am not sure she'll let him go ;
I somehow think she'll change her mind—
Her mind that flutters to and fro,
And changes with the changing wind.

Two men have died for love of her,
And one has taken his own life ;
Where'er she goes she makes a stir,
And takes her pastime in the strife.

Behind her fan she plays with hearts,
And men have called her Queen of them ;
But 'tis a cruel light that darts
From 'neath her diamond diadem.

An Indian Princess decked with scalps
Is not more hot and fierce than she :
A glacier frozen on the Alps
Is not more cold than she can be.

With bold black eyes she wakes desire,
And fans it gently with her smile ;
So she is Queen of all the shire,
And would be Queen of all the Isle.

She dances often, but no faults
Can e'en the most censorious see ;
Each man she passes in the waltz
Thinks, " Heaven ! how she looked at me ! "

Before she bows to you she'll give
You such a look from her dark eyes,
You think, " As surely as I live,
That girl would make home paradise. "

But when she quits you she will take
Her bouquet from your anxious hand,
And with her lips a *moue* will make,
" I've done with you—you understand. "

So Alfred met her in the shires,
And caught *that* look from her black eyes.
And felt the flame of their witch-fires
His inmost citadel surprise.

He danced with her three times that night :
I think she loved his light-brown hair.
'Tis said that dark birds pair with light,
And she was dark and he was fair.

He met her three times in the wood,
He met her three times 'neath the moon ;
Each time he said all that he could,
And thought to surely win her soon.

But having toyed with him awhile,
And fast secured his trembling heart,
She said—and said it with a smile—
“ I fear, dear Alfred, we must part.

“ I never can be yours, I find ;

 You will forgive me—I am young,
And scarcely know my inmost mind.

 Ah, no ! ‘ Love’s dream is o’er,’ ” she sung.

He rose and left her where she stood—

 Arose and left without a word.

She did not dare to think him rude,

 Her thoughts about it she deferred.

Unto her boudoir she returned.

 And when her maid had combed her hair,

She left the candle where it burned,

 And bared her bosom to the air.

“ Blow on my heart, you silly wind !

 You make it not one whit more cold,
Altho’ to touch it, to my mind,

 I find you somewhat over-bold.”

She leaned upon the oaken sill ;

 The evening breeze scarce stirred her hair ;
Without all things were calm and still,
 But all within was cark and care.

“ Why should I rule in one weak breast,
 Whilst now I rule in twenty more ?
My life would lose one-half its zest
 Were I to throw my lovers o’er !

“ I’m tiring of his fair blue eyes,
 I’m tiring of his light brown hair,
Appealing looks, and low replies—
 He hath no soul to do and dare.

“ Love is so weak and mean,” she said,
 “ And praise and flattery are so great ;
I’ll wait awhile before I wed :
 Men love the more the more they wait.”

Her white robe drooped upon the floor,
Her dark hair drooped upon her dress.
Her heart drooped in her more and more,
For all her stately loveliness.

A SONG.



THE lily is fair, but my Love far fairer,
Fairer, fairer far ;
The emerald rare, but her heart far rarer.
Rarer, rarer far.

The rose is sweet, but my Love far sweeter,

Sweeter, sweeter far ;

The white doe fleet, but my Love far fleeter,

Fleeter, fleeter far.

Fine gold shines bright, but her hair far brighter,

Brighter, brighter far ;

Dry leaves fall light, but her foot falls lighter,

Lighter, lighter far.

Sweet songs dwell long, but her voice dwells longer,

Longer, longer far ;

Love of life is strong, but my Love's love stronger,

Stronger, stronger far.

IN IDIPSUM DORMIAM.



GIVE back that dream, kind sleep, to me !

Tho' half was peace and half was pain.

Oh, let me dream it once again ;

Kind sleep, I beg this boon of thee,

Oh, render back that dream to me.

When I awake I am alone,
But in my sleep the lost return,
And with forgotten loves I burn,
And eyes shine on me that have shone
Long since in dreams and dreams alone.

When I awake, no hand takes mine ;
But in my dreams the dearest clasp
Mine in an old remembered grasp,
How long since felt I scarce divine ;
Come back, dear dream, awake, I pine.

In dreams the braids of golden hair
Sweep o'er my cheeks and o'er my brow,
And dearest lips, grown wordless now,
My trouble calm, and sooth my care ;
But when I wake they are not there.

When I awake my brow is bent,
But in my dreams my brow unbends,
Some well-known voice a glamour lends
That charms my fancy too intent
On memory's mournful cerement.

I close my weary eyes in vain,
In vain compose myself to sleep,
No soothing slumbers o'er me creep :
I lie awake with aching brain,
And am my weary self again.

But still I cry, kind sleep, to thee !
Oh, let me dream that dream again,
Tho' half was peace and half was pain,
I ask this simple boon of thee,
Oh, render back that dream to me !

PERE RAVIGNAN.

GUSTAVE DE RAVIGNAN ! noble soldier, nobler priest !

Not when you held the corpse of your commander
Boldly in your arms, before a hundred guns at least,

Did Christian France consider you the grander
Than when you stood before her as the priest.

No, Ravignan ! comforter of souls afflicted !

Using heaven's word as heaven meant you should,
Neither in man's army have you derelicted,

More than in God's army, anything of good.

Not when the Barberini blood soiled your nobility,

And e'en the foeman felt that you were grand,
And shouted at your great courageous immobility,

Were you so great as when you took your stand
And fought the fight 'gainst France's infidelity.

You led the vanguard of the army of great France,

Most catholic amongst all Christian nations ;
And yet you stayed to help the weak ones, if per-
chance

They faltered in the journey of the stations.

Ravignan ! soldier of the Lord, the King of armies,

Nobly and valiantly you fought the battle out :
Noble you were, but nobler now heaven's calm is
Calming you after the warfare and the rout.

APPLE BLOSSOMS.



APPLE blossoms in the orchards,
In the meadows far away
Yellow lilies, lilac-ladies,
In the merry month of May.

King-cups in the breezy meadows,
Purple violets in the copse,
Fleecy clouds like silver shadows
Floating o'er the tall tree tops.

Apple blossoms in the orchards,
She could see them where she lay ;
And they brought her lenten lilies
From the meadows every day.

Propped with pillows near the casement.
She could look out far away,
See her playmates in the meadows,
Hear them shouting at their play ;

Hear the swallows near her window
Twitter underneath the eaves,
Watch the red buds on the branches
Slowly growing into leaves :

And the gentle breezes brought her
Odours from the lilac plume,
Nodding near the little casement
At the window of her room.

Lying there she watched the mating
Sparrows on the chestnut tree,
That grew o'er her chamber window,
Wondering where their nests would be.

Sometimes when the lark was singing
High up in the wondrous blue,
She would look towards him sighing,
“Would I were as free as you!”

Sometimes when the children's voices
Came to her upon the breeze,
She would look towards them sighing,
“Would I were as strong as these.

“ When I die, oh ! lay a garland
Of sweet flowers on my bier,
That they all may find me cheerful
If they come to see me here !

“ Or perhaps the children coming
From the fields into the room,
Might not think that I died happy
If they find me in the gloom.

“ Ellen Veesy in the village
Is more tried with pain than I ;
Will you let her have my pillows
And à Kempis when I die ?

“ I’ve been bad to-day with envy
Of the others at their play,
Weeping at their merry voices
In the meadows far away.

But I saw the fleecy cloudlets
Floating o'er the calm blue sky,
And I thought, what if the Angels
See me weep as they pass by!

“ And I heard the mating sparrows
Chirping on the chestnut tree,
And I thought that He who kept them
Would as surely care for me.

“ Far-off blooms upon the orchards,
Lenten lilies in the field,
Scented lilacs at my window,
Preached to me, till grief was healed.”

When the bloom fell from the lilac,
When the lenten lilies died,
When the purple violets faded
In the time of Whitsuntide.

Long before the apples ripened,
Long before the swallows fled,
They had closed the chamber window,
For the gentle child was dead.

In the churchyard little Emma
Sleeps thro' all the summer sweet ;
Thro' the autumn and the winter,
Thro' the sunshine and the sleet.

And the village children bring her,
In each merry month of May,
Garlands of the fairest lilies,
And the finest hawthorn spray.

IN MEMORIAM.

HER memory shall dwell in our mind,
 As the scent of a rose that is dead :
 Whose odour remaineth behind
 Long after the petals are shed.

Like a song that was heard in old times
Whose strains we can never forget,
Or a favourite book of old rhymes
Whose rhythm remains with us yet ;

Like the scent of a flower that grew
At our nursery window in youth ;
We will keep her dear memory true,
As the gospel of Christ keeps the truth.

As a vessel sunk deep in the bay,
Bides still in the heart of the sea,
Tho' o'er it the ocean may play,
And seem to be careless and free ;

So her memory shall rest in our heart,
Nor laughter shall stir it nor sigh ;
Sweet, secret, alone, and apart
In our heart shall her memory lie.

WATCHING.



THE day grew slowly into night,
The night grew into day ;
But with the same white awful face
Our sleeping father lay.

With tearless face our mother sat,
Her grief stirred in her eyes,
“For if he sleeps he lives,” she said,
“But if he wakes he dies.”

We sent away the old watch-dog,
We locked the court-yard gate ;
We were too sick to eat and drink,
And were too glad to wait.

We blessed the hours as they passed,
Albeit they seemed to creep ;
The only boon we asked from God
Was but twelve hours of sleep.

We held our peace, we hushed our sighs,
And prayed in wordless prayers,
And trembled when the doctor's step
Came creaking up the stairs.

Yet still he slept, and as he slept
More calmly came his breath ;
Ah ! but we thought, if all this sleep
Be but the sleep of death !

Our eyes were often on the clock,
More often on the bed,
Whilst from our mother's silent woe
Our strength was borrow'd.

Vt length the beams of golden light
Crept up the chamber wall ;
And from afar, amid the woods,
We heard the cuckoo call.

The cock crowed in the summer morn,
The weary night was o'er,
Oh ! would he wake again that day,
Or sleep for evermore ?

And still his breath more calmy came.

And in the dawn we saw

A moisture on his pallid brow.

We had not seen before.

Our fears grew slowly into hopes.

Anxiety to tears ;

So far more like his own old look

Is the calmer look he wears.

And when he turned and looked at us,

And called our mother " wife,"

We felt that God had heard our prayers.

And given him back to life.

We let the merry sunshine in

The twelve hours' sleep had brought,

The only boon we asked from God,

The one dear Life we sought.

THE TEMPLAR.

BETHOLD him on his courser's breast,
The faithful and the brave,
They who together long have pressed
On to a glorious grave !

The noble form of each is cold,
The master and the horse,
They whose rough years together rolled,
For better or for worse.

The banner for the which he died
Flaps idly in his hand ;
His sword lies buried at his side
Deep in the blood-stained sand.

His charger's mane doth float athwart
His pale and noble brow :
What they for many years have sought
Is granted to them now.

The master and the faithful steed
Have fallen side by side.
Oh ! praised be the noble deed
For which they nobly died !

No carrion bird nor vulture foul
Shall touch that noble pair ;
The wolf and gory lynx may prowl,
But may not banquet there.

And see ! the moonbeam's silvery light
Falls on the Holy Sign !
It gleams upon the breastplate bright
And shows the Cross divine.

His hands are clasped upon his breast
Where heart no more may beat ;
His soul hath flown unto her rest
And left her earthly seat.

The Lady Moon goes to her rest.
And bids her lord arise ;
Softly she moves towards the West,
And he rules in the skies.

The morning blushes as he comes ;
Her tears his steps await ;
And many a waking insect hums ;
The lark sings at his gate.

A maiden comes along the plain
Between the rows of dead.
“ Alas ! ” she said : “ alas ! ” again,
“ Alas ! alas ! ” she said.

Her lips were very wan and pale,
Her blue eyes dimmed with tears ;
She sighs at every sight she sees,
And sighs at all she hears.

“ Where is my love ?—my wounded knight,
O where, O where is he ?
He is my only love—my life ;
Oh ! give him back to me !

“ Give me him back ! give me him back !

I cannot give him up.

Sweet heaven ! methinks there is a lack

Of mercy in the cup !”

At length the Holy sign she saw

Shine in the mid-day sun ;

And then she knew how bloody war

Its bloody work had done.

And soft she bent her o’er his form,

So cold and still in death ;

And like the summer evening’s storm,

Came the rushing of her breath.

And then to death she did resign.

Poor sweet, her wounded heart ;

She kissed his cheek, and then the Sign—

Her white lips fell apart.

And when the mournful moon at night
Looked from her cloudy throne,
She saw a steed—a dame—a knight—
In death's embraces strown.

And when again the midnight air
Blew o'er the silent dead,
A white—a black—a flaxen hair
Upon its wings was spread.

And when at noontide came the sun.
And looked upon the dead,
It lighted up the Sign that won
A crown for those who bled.

REVENGE.



OH ! never, oh ! never, I ween hath lord
Possessed such a treacherous slave,
For without a blow or without a word,
He hath sent him down to his grave.

The evening her sombre veil had drawn
Half o'er her balmy face,
When the slave amid the ripe rice corn
Crouched in a desolate place.

And, hark ! along the distant steep
A galloping tramp is heard ;
And the slave with a cautious step doth creep
And breathes but a single word.

"Revenge !" he muttered, and grasped the knife
Firm in his nervy hand ;
Oh ! he thought it was sweet to take the life
Of the owner of all the land.

And the horse's tramp came nearer still.
The master is riding home ;
His wife she is waiting beneath the hill
At her lattice under the dome.

Now slowly, cautiously creeps the slave,
And kneels at the dark wayside ;
Above him the feathery palm-trees wave,
Beneath him a river wide.

“ Revenge ! ” he shrieked, and he dashed his knife
Into the master’s breast :
Oh ! how he prayed for his children and wife,
Before he went to his rest !

The deed is done, and the body is cast
Into the foaming tide,
Tinging the water with blood, as it passed
On to the ocean wide.

The slave leaped on to the courser’s back,
Tossed his knife o’er the feathery trees,
And swiftly galloped away on the track
That led to the Indian Seas.

And, behold ! now the hurrying river pours
 Its waters across his path,
And mutters and hisses and murmurs and roars,
 As though boiling over in wrath.

Ha ! why do his eye-balls fiercely glare
 At that which he sees below ?
Why are they fixed in that stony stare,
 Whilst his courser moaneth low ?

Hark ! from the fields a low bay is borne
 Along on the angry wind—
The bloodhounds, ho ! ho ! thro' briar and thorn,
 Are following on behind.

He dashes his heel in his horse's side,
 He urges him on to the leap—
Down thro' the air to the foam of the tide—
 Down to the breast of the deep.

And, behold ! he gaineth the other shore,

And he stands in a rocky cleft ;

The riderless horse is now seen no more—

Alone on the strand he is left.

Above him a pathless rock is raised,

Straight as a prison wall ;

Despairing he stood, and despairing gazed—

The waters rise and fall.

And then, oh, horror ! there floats along

The master's corpse on the wave ;

For that deed of shame and foulest wrong

He must give an account in the grave.

The waters rise and the waters fall,

And the corpse is laid at his feet ;

Above him the pathless stony wall,

Which the waves in monotony beat.

The long hair floats on the midnight air,
The corpse is long and thin,
And there is blood on the bosom bare,
And nought holds up the chin.

Alone he stands by the murdered one,
With the torrent hissing by ;
Oh, horror ! to be there all alone,
With *that*, and then to die.

And higher and higher the swift tide flows,
Over that trembling one ;
And hoarser and hoarser the night wind blows—
His race is nearly run !

Now the corpse is dashed with hideous force
On to the murderer's breast,
And the seething waves they madly toss
The murdered 'gainst murderer pressed.

A moan ! a shriek ! and a rushing tide,
And a word is whispered afar,
Revenge it said, and the waters wide
Reflected the morning star.

“ DROWNED ! DROWNED ! ”

INTO the silvery wave she step't ;
The listening breezes sighed and wept ;
And e'en the current, as it swept,
 Made moan.

The lilies shut their petals white,
And sank beneath the wave that night ;
She stood there in the pale moonlight,
Alone.

Her raven tresses float behind—
Float calmly on the weeping wind :
For ever from its seat the mind
Hath flown.

She seeks beneath yon silvery wave
To find a lone one's peaceful grave,
And he now is no more to save
His own.

She steppeth on into the stream,
And, circling round the pale moonbeam,
Of rare and glistening light, did seem
Her throne.

She bendeth in the current strong,
Upon its breast is borne along ;
To her will soon be pain and wrong
Unknown.

Her white robe flutters in the air ;
Her spirit is no longer there ;
And o'er her grave the lilies fair
Have blown.

All night above the lonely tomb,
The waters thro' the evening gloom.
Do murmur at her silent doom,
And moan.

“WILLIE THE SHEPHERD BOY.”

'Tis only the sunset that shines on the pane.
The same that is gilding the village church vane ;
All within the old cottage is darkened and still,
'Tis only the sunlight that glints o'er the hill.

'Tis only the breeze from the hill-side that steals,
And sounds like the whirl of the sweet spinning wheels;
For the hand that once turned them is buried and cold,
And the distaff and spindle are both of them sold.

'Tis only the pale mountain mist that I see,
Not the smoke of the peat fire lighted for me;
No one stands at the bush by the little green gate,
Although it is evening and Willie is late.

Oh! cruel to mock me so, light on the pane,
When you know that I look for my mother in vain;
Oh! cruel to mock me so, breeze on the hill, [still.
When you know that the spinning-wheel's silent and

Her old tartan hangs on the peg at the door,
She'll ne'er wear the bonnie old cloak any more;
I'm lone in the gloaming, the twilight is sad
To me when my mother hath left her own lad.

When night came down dark from the high mountain crest,

“Our Father” we said e’er we went to our rest;

“Our Father, be pitiful now unto me,

For my mother hath left me and left me to Thee.”

So he slept in the arms of the Keeper of sheep,

Who have only his sweet voice to hush them to sleep;

And Willie the shepherd boy turned to his bed,

And saw not the angels that watched at the head.

BENEATH THE YEWS.

GOLDEN and bright at sunset,
 Stood the mountains far away,
And brilliantly the dancing waves
 Flashed out upon the bay ;
The sails upon the passing ships
 Were tinged with golden hues,
But the shade was on the narrow grave
 Down underneath the yews.

The cross upon the taper spire
Caught up the golden light ;
But down beneath the yew trees
Was the darkness of the night ;
The sheep were on the mountains,
The boats were on the bay,
But on the grave beneath the yews
The silent shadows lay.

I looked upon the gilded hills
Towards the setting sun,
And saw adown the rocky steeps
The mountain torrents run ;
I looked towards the passing ships,
Far down upon the sea,
And heard the sailors' merry song
Come floating up to me.

The sunlight faded on the hills,
The boats upon the bay
Spread out their sails unto the breeze,
And slowly swept away ;
I did not mourn that day was dead
With all its golden hues,
For my heart was with the shadows
On the grave beneath the yews.

NOT THEN.



Not with the taper's flashing light from the diamonds
at her breast,
And a troop of lovers bowing, not then I loved her
best ;

Not with her golden tresses floating round her at the
ball,
Looking fairer than the fairest, being purest of them
all,

Not then I loved her best.

I loved her then—

But much more when

She held my baby at her breast.

Not when she trod the gravelled path, in a silk so
fine and rare,

That she carried sunlight with her thro' the garden
everywhere,

With her large green fan held sideways by such a
little hand,

The roses bowed and courted her as she glided thro'
the land,

Not then I loved her best.

I loved her then—

But much more when

She held my baby at her breast.

Not when thro' fair white lilies we went floating
down the river,

And she stretched forth a tiny hand that made its
bosom shiver,

Lightly laughing with two lips so pink and a row of
teeth so white,

No wonder the old river shook with a terrible de-
light.

Not then I loved her best.

I loved her then—

But much more when

She held my baby at her breast.

Not when I found her sitting in the laurels' twink-
ling maze,
And a hum of busy insects round, vociferous in her
praise,
Then when she gave me her right hand and accept-
ance so expressed.
With acquiescent eyes turned down, not then I loved
her best :

I loved her then—
But much more when
She held my baby at her breast.

A PROPOSAL.

WE were toiling up the hill, summer sunshine on
the cliffs,
And beyond the breezy ocean, faintly dotted o'er
with skiffs ;

“ Let me help you, love,” I murmured, linked a
trembling arm in hers,
Led her upward from the moorlands, upward to the
murm’ring firs.

When we reached, them, gentle breezes sighing
smothered her demurs,
Was it strange my lips should whisper into that
small ear of hers ?

“ Love,” I said, “ I’m sick of climbing up the hill of
life alone,
Will you climb its side beside me as my wife, my
guide, my own ? ”

Nothing said, but more reliant was the pressure on
my arm ;
And the breezes in the fir trees singing still their
soothing psalm.

Once again, "Dear! will you lead me on thro' life
unto the death?"

Words that tossed and stammered strangely, in the
laboring of my breath.

"Tears! my love? nay, have I grieved you with
these foolish words of mine?"

Yet perhaps their meaning, dearest, in a somewhat
you divine."

Came the breezes thro' the fir trees, from the low-
lands at our feet,

Odours from the gentle moorlands floating upwards,
passing sweet.

Flushing face pressed on my bosom lips that faintly
murmured "Yes!"

You who most excel in guessing, guess my pleasure
—only guess!

“AMARI ALIQUID.”

I HAVE no love, at least no love
As only true love ought to be ;
For merely fancies from above
Come o'er my soul as memory.

We cannot love the dead, as men
Are wont to love the maids that live;
I only sigh, ah ! live again,
If only, sweet one, to forgive !

Thy heart is cold, as it should be,
To earthly love and wanton words.
And I may never strike for thee
The earthly lyre of fleshly chords :

Thy heart is cold within thy tomb,
And mine is cold upon the earth ;
Yet I keep murmuring in the gloom
Some foolish words of thy true worth.

O love ! wake up, and warm my heart,
And wake an echo through my soul ;
I live, yet die—alone, apart,
I faint in struggling through my dole.

Sweet soul ! I cannot think you sleep,

I cannot think you rest apart ;

O, surely love, you still must keep

Some ancient echo in your heart ;

Some tale of troth I told thee, sweet.

When we were young, both man and maid,

And I lay smiling at your feet,

And you were blushing in the glade.

The roses bloom, love, o'er your grave—

I plant them fresh, sweet, every year—

And they bloom sweetest, only save

The buds I twined once in your hair.

Ah, well ! perhaps 'tis better so,

And you are better in your grave,

Than living, love, may be to know

What fickle heart to thee I gave.

A COMPLAINT.

O cruel Frost ! O cruel Frost !

 You might have struck the thorny Briar.
Or else athwart the mountain crossed
 And killed the grass in your desire.

You might have settled on the stream
And frozen up its wayward breast ;
So with a cruel kiss might seem
To soothe the victim you caressed.

You might have played upon the hills,
Or freaked upon the heathy moor,
Or subjugated tinkling rills,
And left my Lily evermore.

You might have gone down to the sea
And made its waves quite quiet lie ;
And there'd been nought 'twixt thee and me
Had you but passed my Lily by.

You might have gone among the hedges
And woven shrouds with your white rime ;
You might have cursed the sullen sedges
And left my flower till summer-time.

You might have killed the Rose or Myrtle

Had you but left my Lily strong ;

You might have yellowed summer's kirtle,

Or hushed the song thrush in her song.

You might have gone into the glade

And struck the grandest oak with death,

Or e'en the loftiest linden bade

To hold her odoriferous breath.

You might have spared my gentle Lily—

The only flower I cared to keep :

You might have breathed your breath so chilly

On some poor moss on mountain steep.

Ah ! better so ; well, better so !

The saints are fond of Lilies fair ;

And Angels bear them to and fro,

Entwined around their golden hair.

The saints shall love my Lily white,
And Angels tend with loving hand ;
And first shall meet my anxious sight
My Lily love in heavenly land.

A CHARM.



SHE SLEEPS.

LAY at her head the pure Blue-bells !

She sleeps so soundly and so sweet.

Lay round her wreaths of Pimpernels,

And Gillyflowers at her feet !

Lay on her breast a Lily white !
Love-lies-bleeding in either palm.
Draw up the blinds, let in the light,
And watch the working of the charm.

SHE WAKES.

Her eyes are bluer than Blue-bells,
Her breath more sweet than Gillyflowers ;
Her lips more red than Pimpernels,
That peep between the summer showers.

Her breast more fair than Lilies white
That grow in some sequestered part.
Draw down the blinds, shut out the light,
For love lies bleeding in her heart !

SWEET BRIAR.



Do you remember how they all were sitting by the
fire,

You behind your screen,

And in your small left hand a bunch of bright,
sweet-scented Briar,

Luxuriantly green ?

I feigned to take the posy from your half-reluctant
hand

That trembled slightly ;

And, as you bent to give it me, I felt your sweet
breath fanned

My hot brow lightly.

I meant to press your hand, but grasped the prickly
Briar instead,

You so intending ;

I saw the mischief in your eyes, altho' you bent
your head,

And loved you bending.

A treaty, low I whispered on the fireside of the
screen,

See, signed in blood !

Give me your hand upon it ! won't you give it me,
colleen ?

I thought you would !

I keep the Briars still. The leaves are dead, the
thorns still quick,

That hurt and cured me :

I love the faded leaves, but much more do I love
the prick

That reassured me.

You've strewn my path with many roses, dearest,
since that night

You gave the Briars ;

And on your love, my wife, my heart with happy
trust reposes,

And, satisfied, desires.

DISCARDED.



BETTER had I died before I

Ever set mine eyes on thee !

Better been a carcase gory,

Sleeping somewhat martially !

Better on the field of battle,
 With a red stain at my heart,
Than to follow thee like cattle
 To a shamble in the mart !

Just to scatter a mere trifle,
 A few life-drops in thy way,
And my inmost self to stifle,
 Hold my breath to hear thee say :

“ Foolish fellow ! you are dreaming,
 Or, may-be, are full of wine ;
I exist not in my seeming—
 Never, never can be thine.”

Fool, ah ! fool of hopeless passion,
 Instrument for you to touch,
Singing songs of cold compassion,
 Smiling, smiling overmuch.

Well, perhaps my death will calm thee.

Stop thy whirling in the dance ;

Sure I am 'twill never harm thee,

If I die in foreign France.

Tears? I do not ask them, Lady !

Ask them from thy shaded eyes ;

Nor expect them in the heyday

Of triumphant courtesies.

Yet methinks that somewhat slightly

You have trifled with a heart ;

And, altho' you played it brightly,

Still have played a cruel part.

All is severed now between us—

Finished, ended, acted out ;

And the audient world have seen us,

Smiling, end the play, no doubt.

A SONG.

GREAT mother Earth, rock her to quiet sleep,
Close her troubled eyes,
Let sweet dreams arise,
And gentle slumbers o'er her bosom creep.

Dear mother Earth, soothe with a gentle touch

Her small weary feet

Mantled as is meet

For tender virgin wearied overmuch.

Kind mother Earth, let her lie warm and soft

With twin folded palm

O'er twin moulded charm,

And her closed eyes inquisitive aloft.

Mother, sing in her tiny crumpled ear

Just this lullaby :

He who loves is nigh !

Alas ! she sleeps so sound she cannot hear.

A SKETCH.



SILENT she stood, and nothing said :

A gentle flush upon her brow,
That from her forehead downward sped,
And left it after white as snow.

Her hair was braided o'er her brow,
In coronet fashion up above ;
There was no man on earth, I vow,
Could stand before her, and not love.

Just where her tresses left her face,
A little ear peeped from the shade ;
Her neck was arched with matchless grace.
And turned a little towards the glade.

The summer sunshine on her hair
Rippled in little waves of light ;
A Queen of Nature passing fair
Beneath the linden branches bright.

Again the flush upon her brow ;
She turned, and then I saw it all.
The thrush within the grove, I vow,
Grew yet more joyful in his call.

A little word, a simple word,

A world of rapture did express :

At last she spoke—I faintly heard

The welcome answer, “ Dearest, yes !”

ELLEN.

LET the violets fade
On their bank in the glade,
And the breath of the summer die on the clover ;
Let the red roses fall,
Let the flowers die all,
'Tis only when Ellen frowns summer is over.

Let the lark with shut wing
Lie asleep in the ling ;
Let the drowsy bee hide in the cups of the roses :
Let the nested birds rest,
With their broods 'neath their breast,
'Tis only when Ellen sleeps summer day closes.

Let the long shadows crawl
From the trees to the wall,
And climb to the window where Ellen is sitting,
If she leaves me her hand,
Oh ! the gloom on the land
Is in tune with our silence, and sweetly befitting.

ASSURED.



SHE sleeps—I wonder if within her heart
I keep the place I hold there when she wakes ;
Or whether, while she sleeps alone, apart,
Across the ocean of her slumber breaks

Some wave that whispers of a dearer name :
Her lips so often move, as tho' she holds
Some converse in the land of dreams,
I wonder while she sleeps, if she enfolds
Me in the robe of love that hath no seams :
Ah, yes ! for when she wakes, she breathes my
name,
And turns and wakes, and waking calls to me,
" Love, are you there ? I wake from dreams of
thee !"

THE END.

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